

TERMS TO KNOW

By international agreement, tropical cyclone is the general term for all cyclonic circulations originating over tropical waters, classified by form and intensity as follows:

Tropical disturbance: A moving area of thunderstorms in the tropics that maintains its identity for 24 hours or more. A common phenomenon in the tropics.

Tropical depression: Rotary circulation, sustained wind speed 38 miles per hour (33 knots) or less.

Tropical storm: Distinct rotary circulation, sustained wind speed range of 39-73 miles per hour (34-63 knots).

Hurricane: Pronounced rotary circulation, sustained wind speed of 74 miles per hour (64 knots) or more.

Small craft cautionary statements. When a tropical cyclone threatens a coastal area, small craft operators are advised to remain in port or not to venture into the open sea.

Gale Warnings are issued when winds of 39-54 miles an hour (34-47 knots) are expected.

Storm Warnings are issued when winds of 55-73 miles an hour (48-63 knots) are expected.

A Hurricane Watch is issued when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 36 hours. Preliminary precautions should be taken.

A Hurricane Warning is issued when sustained winds of 74 mph or more are expected in a specified area in 24 hours or less. A hurricane warning can remain in effect when

dangerously high water or high waves continue, even though winds may be less than 74 mph. Actions for protection of life and property should begin immediately when the warning is issued.

Flash Flood Watch means a flash flood is possible in the area stay alert.

Flash Flood Warning means a flash flood is imminent occurring; take immediate action.

Tornadoes spawned by hurricanes sometimes produce severe damage and casualties. If a tornado is reported in your area a warning will be issued.

Midway Island

French Frigate Shoals

Buoy 51001

Kauai

Oahu

HONOLULU

Maui

Buoy 51005

Hawaii

Buoy 51003

Buoy 51002

Buoy 51004

Johnston Island

Palmyra Island

PACIFIC OCEAN

Example
Read 133.0° West
Read 35.5° North

San Francisco

35°N

Los Angeles

San Diego

30°N

25°N

20°N

15°N

10°N

La Paz

TRACKING A HURRICANE

Advisories are numbered consecutively for each storm. Present location and intensity are described and expected movement is given. Tropical cyclone advisories are issued at six-hour intervals — at 5 a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m., and 11 p.m., Hawaiian Standard Time. Each message gives the name, center position, intensity, and forecast movement of the tropical cyclone.

Hurricane center positions are given by latitude (for example, 35.5 degrees North) and longitude (for example, 133.0 degrees West). When the storm is nearer the islands, center positions may also be given as statute miles and compass direction from a specified point.

When you receive a tropical cyclone advisory, note the advisory number, center position, intensity and forecast direction of movement. Then mark the center position on the tracking chart. Because hurricanes change direction very quickly, you should listen more carefully to where the storm will go than where it has been.

DO NOT CONCENTRATE ON THE CENTER ALONE. Remember that strong winds, high surf, and torrential rains can be experienced up to several hundred miles from the center of the storm.

See the color block at the right of the chart for an example of how to plot a storm from a position given in latitude and longitude.

Tropical cyclones are not given names until they reach the storm stage — that is, rotary circulation and sustained winds over 38 miles per hour (33 knots).